



University of the Mountains



**PENELOPE GANDHI**



Mountain Partnership

Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO)  
of the United Nations

The Penelope Gandhi Mission is one of the pioneering projects of the University of the Mountains, an official member of the Mountain Partnership of the United Nations - Food and Agriculture Organisation. The University of the Mountains is a voluntary, non-profit charity set up in Crete in 2007 by Professor of Ophthalmology Ioannis Pallikaris, academics of the University of Crete and major foreign universities, intellectuals, artisans, shepherds, farmers and folk craftsmen of rural Crete, with the aim of preserving and studying the way of life of mountain communities.

It is a way of life that as a whole, as social expression and daily life, obeys the age-old relationship between nature and people, social relationships and ways of gaining one's living, through the revival of natural sources of wealth, discouraging the abandonment of villages, non-exhaustion of natural riches, striking a balance between water, wildlife, forests, animals and birds, and developing a small-scale, high-value economy.













Collecting flax, Aimonas  
Mylopotamou, Rethymnon,  
July 2015





## **Why the name Penelope Gandhi?**

Penelope is the greatest weaver of antiquity, the eternal Symbol of loyalty who lived her entire life at her loom.

The world of the Iliad and Odyssey is full of noble women and princesses who wove items for their homes.

The craft of weaving was an emblem of their lives.

Through the loom she showed her devotion, her love and her multifaceted, ingenious thoughts. On the loom she unfolded her actions and emotions, waiting patiently for Odysseus' return.

Mahatma Gandhi was chosen because the great Indian's love for and personal engagement with Weaving was a social stance against homogeneity and alienation from cloth, the first material that is wrapped around us.





Prof. I. Pyrgiotakis of the University of  
Crete at a Pedagogical intervention  
9th Elementary school of Rethymon,  
November 9, 2016









The team of the Penelope Gandhi Mission consists of women weavers and people familiar with the culture of the sacred art of weaving, together with many volunteers.

We are backed by international representatives of the arts and sciences.

Dean Eleni Glykatzi – Arveler is leading us all.

Other supporters include Greek university professors and well-known academics from Europe and America, and major figures in the field of folk experience and knowledge.

Supporting institutions are the University of Crete, the Schools of Architecture and Agriculture of the Technological Educational Institute of Crete, all the Municipalities and Schools of Crete, the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, the Benaki Museum, the Heraklion Archaeological Museum and the European School of Heraklion. We are associated with and work with women acclaimed for their scientific and social work from Palestine, Iran and India.



Kafeneion of the Mountains  
Rodovani, Chania,  
November 26, 2016





The Mission team encourages the people of Crete to take up the thread of this ancient, divine art, as an element that connects and reconciles people with themselves, with nature and with other people, not only in Crete but all over the world.


The philosophy of the **Penelope Gandhi Mission** is not simply an attempt to revive an abandoned, dying art. Our aim is to re-evaluate the sacred art of Weaving, to highlight its place in every dimension of human existence and to return it to the modern creative and productive field, while the servants of the weaver's art are still alive to teach its wonderful secrets to the young generation.





Cultivating flax  
Stratoi, Selino, Chania  
November 9, 2016




A group of people are gathered in a dark room, likely a study or meeting. They are seated on a patterned rug, illuminated by a central light source, possibly a candle or a small lamp. The room is dimly lit, with the primary light coming from the center, creating a warm and focused atmosphere. The people are engaged in conversation or a shared activity, with some looking towards the center and others looking at each other. The background is dark, with some faint outlines of people standing in the distance.

Prof. N. Stampolidis of the  
University of Crete at a small study  
at the Basilica of Saint Marcus,  
Heraklion , November 2012



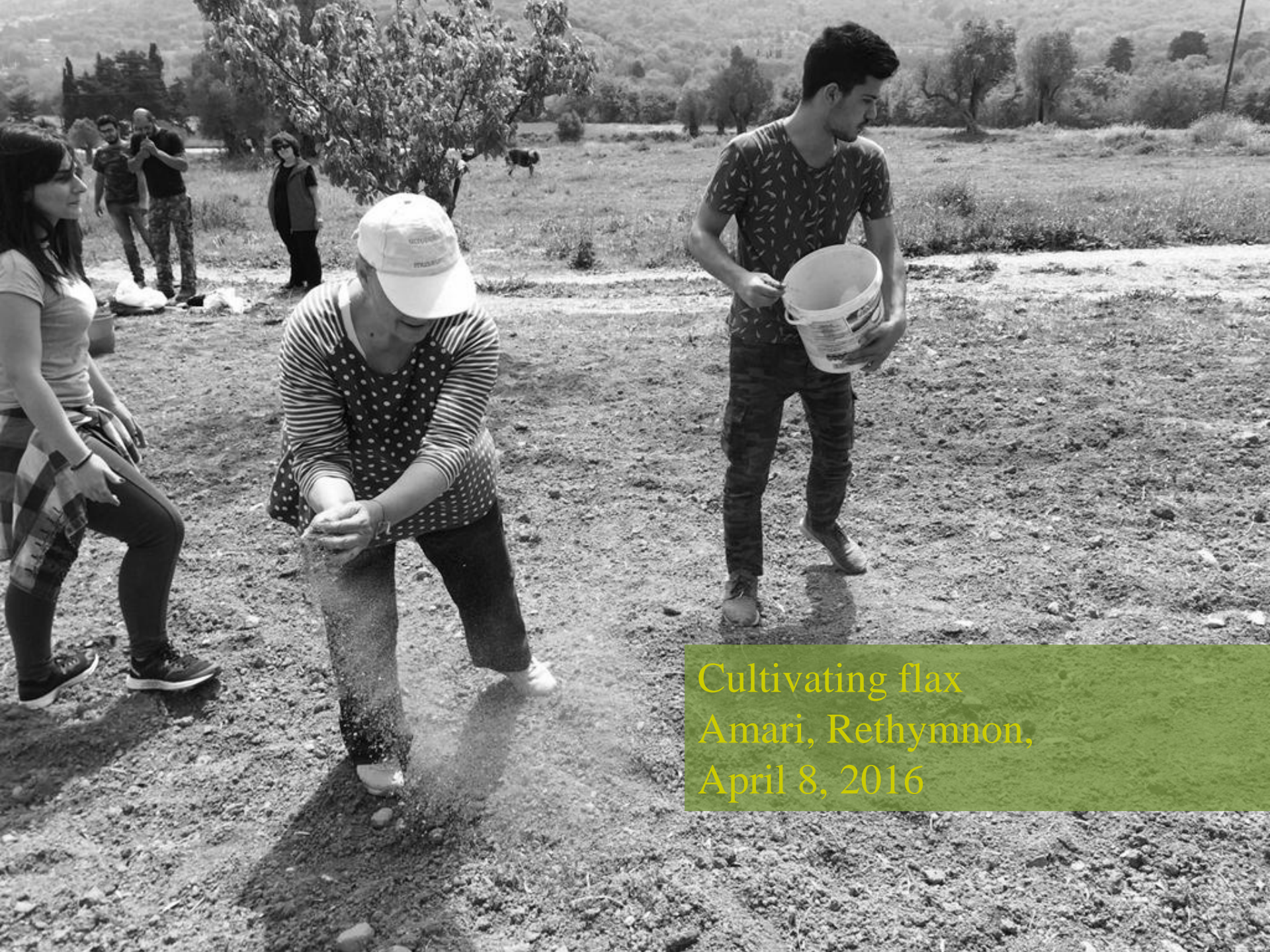
The **Penelope Gandhi Mission team** for the past 10 years has:

- recorded, utilised, preserved and promoted the riches of Weaving.
- created Weaving Faculties / Homes across Greece.
- made audio and video recordings of meetings with women master-weavers, weaving techniques, tools, materials, decorations and motifs.
- intervened creatively in society, developing small-scale, high-value economies and new cottage-industry forms of production.
- made Greek and Cretan culture international again, connecting it to the world of culture, art and science, and placing the Cretan art of weaving on the Greek Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage List.
- sowed flax, farmed silk, processed wool and produced handmade yarn.
- used natural plant and mineral dyes and porphyry, faithfully continuing the practices of Cretan women since the time of Minos.
- created numbered, certified textiles and cloth and recreated textiles inspired by Minoan art, for sale on the international market, to museums and private collections.
- had scientists in a variety of fields teach primary-school children the holy Cretan art of Weaving, which has been successfully incorporated as an elective subject in the flexible curriculum, in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Education.



Recording the sounds of the Cretan loom  
Burnemouth University, UK  
Aimonas Mylopotamou, Rethymnon  
July 17, 2016





Cultivating flax  
Amari, Rethymnon,  
April 8, 2016





Processing flax  
Aimonas Mylopotamou, Rethymnon,  
April 8, 2016





Pedagogical intervention  
46th Elementary school of Heraklion,  
European education school of Heraklion  
Moires, Heraklion, April 1, 2016





Educating teachers  
9th Elementary school of Chania,  
December 9, 2016





Educating foreign students  
Emmanuel College – Boston USA  
Aimonas Mylopotamou, Rethymnon,  
July 7, 2016





Kafeneion of the Mountains  
Goudouras, Lasithi,  
September 30, 2016





Meeting for the wool cottage industry  
Krana, Mylopotamos, Rethymnon  
December 12, 2016



«Under the glance of the new generation...»  
Krana Mylopotamou, Rethymnon  
December 12, 2016





Teaching students how to produce wool threads, Palaia Roumata Chania, May 2015



Ceremony of the Flax  
Penelope Gandhi team  
Heraklion, June 21, 2015





## **Exhibition at the Basilica of Saint Marcus, Heraklion, December 2013**

17 days, 54 speeches, 35 speakers, 1.200 students  
12.000 visitors, 3.500 people asking to weave again











Penelope Gandhi at the **Benaki Museum**,  
Athens, November- December 2013  
57 days, 20 speakers,  
5.000 students, 30.000 visitors







Weavers from all over Crete weaving  
at the **Benaki Museum, Athens**





# Ariadne's Thread and Penelope's loom

Penelope Gandhi in the  
Archaeological Museum of Heraklion



Η Πηνελόπη Gandhi  
στο Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο  
Ηρακλείου  
24 Μαΐου έως και 20 Ιουνίου  
2016



24 May - 20 June 2016

Opening ceremony: 29 May, 18.30



THE DAY IS TODAY

[WWW.PANOREON.GR](http://WWW.PANOREON.GR)





**Exhibition “Ariadne's Thread and Penelope's Loom”**  
**Heraklion Archaeological Museum**  
May 24 – June 20, 2016  
30 speakers, 50.000 visitors , 3.000 students



Exhibition “Ariadne's Thread and  
Penelope's Loom”  
Heraklion Archaeological Museum  
May 24 – June 20, 2016  
Pedagogical intervention





Pedagogical intervention  
13th Elementary school of Chania  
May 2014





Pedagogical intervention – Mutual learning: 2nd and 5<sup>th</sup> Elem. School of Nea Alikarnassos Heraklion May 2013





Pedagogical intervention  
2<sup>nd</sup> Elementary School of Rethymnon  
June 2013





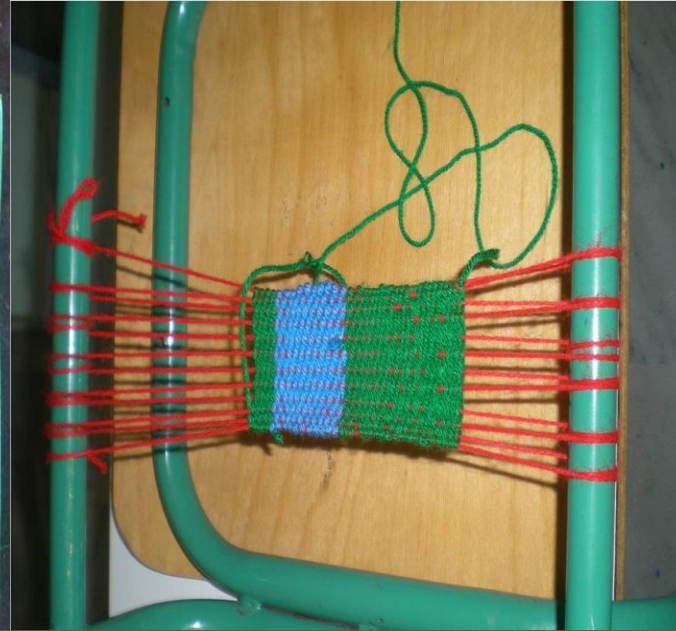
Pedagogical intervention  
School of European Education of Heraklion  
June 2013





Pedagogical intervention  
Primary School of Feres Evrou, Thrace  
April 2017





Weaving creations from students  
of Elementary schools of Crete







Summer school of Weaving art,  
Technological Educational Institute of Piraeus  
Aimonas Mylopotamou, Rethymnon  
June 2013





Educating foreign students:  
Kristina Lehmann, Faculty of Textile and Clothing  
Technology, University of Hochschule Niederrhein,  
Germany, Supervisor Prof. Marion Ellwagner – Mohr



Cretan Stories



Weaving the Greek flag  
Celebrations of the 100 years of the Union of Crete  
with Greece, Chania, December 2013





Producing wool thread  
Emparos Viannou – June 2014

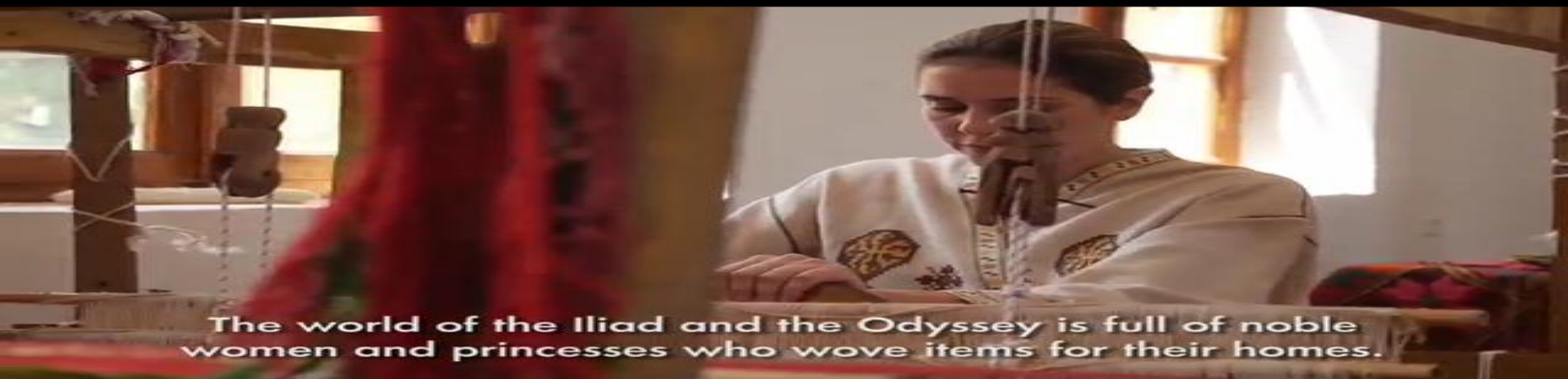




Producing silk thread  
Palaia Roumata, Chania – July 2014







The world of the Iliad and the Odyssey is full of noble women and princesses who wove items for their homes.

The Mission Penelope Gandhi at the  
Victoria and Albert Museum  
London , September 2014

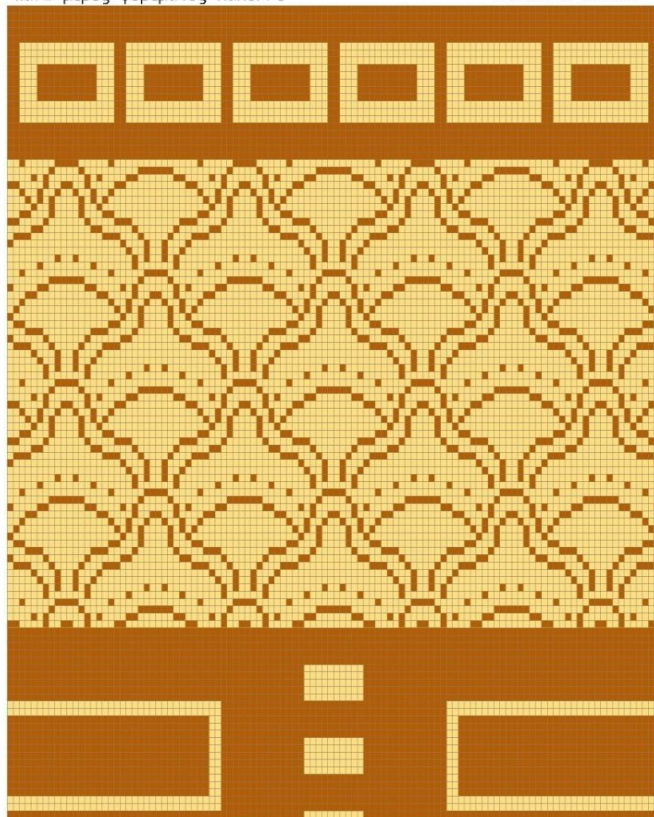






πάνω μέρος φορέματος Auxerre

ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ GANDHI



**We are weaving with our  
own silk the royal clothing of  
Princess Fronimi for the  
Museum of Ancient  
Eleutherna**

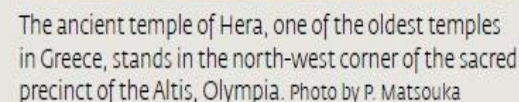
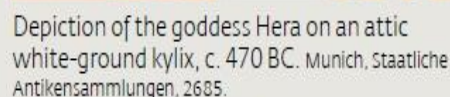
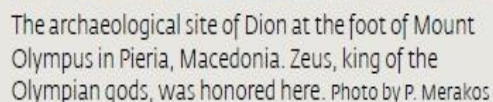




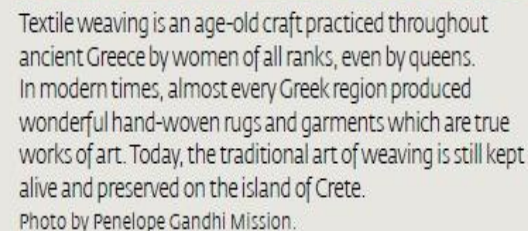
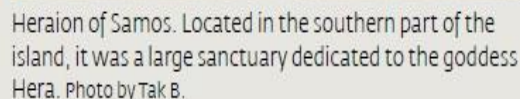


Collecting flowers for natural dyes  
Gergeri Heraklion, May 2015





Penelope Gandhi Mission at the «Greece Gods and Heroes» booklet of the Greek National Tourism Organization – October 2014





Processing flax,  
Prasies, Rethymnon,  
November 2015





Kafeneion of the Mountains,  
Kipoi, Evros, Thrace  
April 2017



Penelope Gandhi Mission at  
DOCUMENTA 14,  
Athens, May 2017





## Cooperation with the Nest Organization network



## Current - Future actions

- «Ariadne's Thread and Penelope's Loom», small studies of the thread and its meaning Municipality of Mylopotamos, Rethymnon, 01-31 July 2017
- The Penelope Gandhi Mission at the European Cultural Centre of Delphi – June 30<sup>th</sup>-July 5<sup>th</sup> 2017
- The Penelope Gandhi Mission at Documenta 14 in Athens
- Cooperation with the Ethnological Museum of Thrace
- Expanding cooperation with Emmanuel College, Boston USA
- Participation of Penelope Gandhi at the World Congress of Smart Materials, Osaka, Japan Mar 6-8, 2018 in Osaka, Japan, with the theme "Weaving an Avatar Dream Together"
- Expansion of cooperation with the University and the TEI of Crete to prepare graduate theses and dissertations
- Dissertation of Ms K. Gkotsidou, Hellenic Open University- Administration of Cultural Units -Mission Penelope Gandhi
- Dissertation of Ms. L.Tsichla, Hellenic Open University, on "Strategic development of a cultural activity in the region during the economic crisis. Case study: Mission Penelope Gandhi
- Cooperation with Dr. Bernice Jones, lecturer at the Ringling College of Art and Design in the US Florida, who specializes in the representation of ancient garments worldwide and the creation of original Minoan garments
- Production, cultivation, process of flax, silk, wool at the four prefectures of Crete
- Creation of cottage industries for wool, silk and flax in Crete
- Creation of the Institute of Threads in Krana of Mylopotamos
- Creation of a modern, innovative lifelong learning education center with a scope to develop local domestic small-scale economies of great value in Krana of Mylopotamos, Rethymnon
- Cooperation with the National Archaeological Resources Fund for the extension of the activities of the Mission Penelope Gandhi in all the museums of the country.





Thank you



Crete island  
2017